

*Saskatchewan
Rural
Telephone
Companies
Association*

*Minutes of
1952 Convention*

The annual convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Telephones was held in Saskatoon on June 30, 1952. The president opened the meeting at 11 a.m. After his opening remarks, the president introduced Mr. Swanson, assistant director of mineral rights in the department of Natural Resources, for the purpose of finding out the various problems that rural companies must meet in dealing with oil companies.

Mr. Swanson stated he was glad to be able to attend our convention, so that he and the department of Natural Resources could get information re-complaints of damages caused to rural companies by oil companies. He stated that up to now a very fine relationship with the oil companies existed, but kept a very close watch on all their activities. However, a lot of things may happen of which we have no knowledge. We compel them to have a license.

Mr. Sutton of Marshall Rural Telephone Co., explained the main troubles: "The oil companies would come during the night, build up a road grade which restricted clearance. As a result wires were broken and the telephone company had to repair the damages. Often-times, the farmer on whose land a well is drilled does not know when they are coming. Sometimes poles are broken -- perhaps 100 or 200 feet of wire missing; therefore, there is disruption of telephone service.

Mr. Swanson:—"I had no idea that this was going on until now. We hold their deposit until we have had clearance from the farmer. Perhaps, we should also have clearance from the rural telephone company. If the mineral rights are in the hands of the farmer he must know when the oil company is coming onto his land; if in the Crown the department is clear where the mineral rights reside."

Q:—Is there any way we can compel them to give us notice when they are hauling heavy equipment?

A:—They have to have a license from the department and clearance from the farmer. Maybe they should also be compelled to get clearance from the telephone company.

Q:—Is there anything we can do when the oil companies break wires, etc., and then leave for a different district so that we cannot trace them?

A:—We still have a hold on the party that is drilling the well.

Q:—We do not know where he is drilling.

A:—All we need to know is where the damage was done. We can still go after them.

Mr. Swanson stated that up until the pre-

sent time he had no idea that these things were going on because he had not received any formal complaints from the rurals, and he stressed the fact that the telephone company should send in a complaint, giving the section and the township and that the Department would immediately follow it up. Oil companies must see that proper clearance is maintained so as not to interrupt telephone service. They must arrange with the farmer for surface rights. If no satisfactory arrangements can be worked out then the farmer may go to arbitration. We do not wish to stop development but oil companies must comply with good public relations. In case of damage give us the L.S.D.—section—township—range, and we will follow up all such complaints.

Sutton:—We would like to find out who can lay down the law to say that they have to have a permit to go over these roads.

Swanson:—They have to have a license. It resides pretty much in the municipality. What about clearance from rural companies before oil companies can enter upon the farmer's land?

Kinistino:—They tore down our lines, but they notified us.

Sutton:—What is the penalty if they go up in the middle of the night?

Swanson:—You will have to set up a penalty.

Randall:—"We have been so tough on them that the movers don't move unless the troubleman is there."

Q:—"Is there anything in the regulations of the department of Natural Resources that says that a returned soldier can get the return of his mineral rights?"

Swanson:—There is nothing in our department.

Sutton:—It is federal?

Randall:—The Federal says it is provincial.

Swanson:—I am not worried by the monetary loss so much as the interruption of telephone service.

Randall:—I feel that Mr. Swanson knows what the trouble is, and, so we will close this discussion. However, if anyone has anything further I suggest he speak privately to Mr. Swanson.

Chairman:—Our proceeding last year was that instead of reading the minutes you take them along with you over the lunch hour. After lunch we have a motion that we accept them as read. Approved.

The secretary read the financial statement for the past year. G.G. Patrick & Co., Chartered Accountants, for the period July 2, 1951 and including June 28, 1952.

STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS
Receipts

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Membership Fees | \$ 376.45 |
| Total Receipts | \$ 376.45 |
| Balances — July 2, 1951 | |
| Cash in Bank | \$586.19 |
| Dominion of Canada Bond | 50.00 |
| | 636.19 |
| | <u>\$1,012.64</u> |

Payments

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Directors' Travel Expenses | 222.80 |
| Printing, postage, stationery | 99.36 |
| Secretary's Salary 1950-51 | 25.00 |
| Stenographic Service | 7.50 |
| Hall and Room Rental | 30.00 |
| Audit | 5.00 |
| Exchange | 5.96 |
| | 395.62 |
| Total Payments | 395.62 |
| Balances — June 28, 1952 | |
| Cash in Bank | 567.02 |
| (x) Dominion of Canada Bond | 50.00 |
| | 617.02 |
| | <u>\$1,012.64</u> |

Moved by Manitou Lake, seconded by Young, that the financial statement be accepted and adopted. Carried.

Moved by Briarlea, seconded by Round Plains that the resolution committee be picked by the chairman. Carried.

Committee Appointed:—Mr. Fritshaw, Mr. Flowers, Mr. Streeton.

It was moved that we adjourn for lunch and that the minutes of 1951 convention be read during the lunch hour. Carried.

After lunch it was moved by Briarlea, seconded by Round Plains that the minutes of the last convention be adopted as read. Carried.

Mr. John Cairns, deputy mayor, spoke briefly to the convention. He conveyed the regrets of Mayor Mills at not being able to attend and expressed his own pleasure at being able to come and meet the delegates. He said he hoped the rural telephone companies fully realized the importance of their work, and he wished them every success in the future.

Mr. Cavanagh, Supt. of Rurals, stated that the rurals on the whole during the past year had made certain strides. The increase of subscribers over 1951 is approximately 1,000.

Mr. Medhurst, district superintendent in Saskatoon, extended to the convention the greetings of Mr. Muirhead and Mr. Purdy. He stated that he was very happy to be present representing the Saskatchewan Government

Telephone Association, and that he would be glad to answer any questions put to him.

Before the discussion period with Mr. Cavanagh and Mr. Medhurst, the chairman introduced Mr. Thompson of the Workmen's Compensation Board to give a report on the standing of the rurals. Mr. Thompson mentioned in his remarks that the rural telephone companies were in a class by themselves in so far as the Board was concerned because they were not assessed according to wages but according to instruments. There were 987 covered by the Act, he said. He gave the following report:

Assessments paid: Accident costs paid out:

| | | | |
|------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| 1946 | \$10,500 | 1946 | \$ 4,622 |
| 1947 | 13,100 | 1947 | 14,545 |
| 1948 | 11,300 | 1948 | 7,482 |
| 1949 | 12,524 | 1949 | 18,982 |
| 1950 | 12,572 | 1950 | 20,982 |
| 1951 | 14,910 | 1951 | undetermined |

Reserve at the present time \$20,000;

During those five years the total assessment of \$60,000 did not cover the total accident costs of \$66,000. Mr. Thompson said that the number of accidents had not increased, but that the seriousness of them had. He stressed the fact that the chief causes of accidents were faulty poles and men falling off poles. He urged caution in checking poles before starting work on them.

A brief discussion followed.

Q:—Does the Compensation Board treat the telephone companies as a separate entity from the rest of the members?

A:—They differ only in that they are not assessed according to wages, but on phone boxes.

Q:—Has the Board the power to raise the assessment?

A:—Yes. These are reviewed each fall.

Q:—Wouldn't it be possible for rural telephone companies to know that the Workmen's Compensation Board is liable to examine their equipment to see if same is in satisfactory condition to be used?

A:—We have an accident prevention officer who checks equipment. You are liable to get into trouble if you repeatedly have equipment in poor repair.

Q:—Is there any definite amount paid to a man if he is injured or killed?

A:—He is paid a pension for life or all costs that may be incurred.

Q:—Are all accidents handled through the local doctor for settlement?

A:—Not Necessarily.

Q:—Isn't it in the Act that you are not allowed to put barb wire on telephone poles?

A:—Yes. It is in the Act.

Q:—Isn't it an understood fact that unless all your equipment is in good condition there is no compensation paid at all?

A:—No. Compensation is paid regardless.

A discussion followed re:- the problem of long distance calls into Alberta from Saskatchewan. Mr. Sutton of Marshall outlined his problem: "We are on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. An oil man phones Calgary, ties our central up for a lengthy period but Calgary gets the bill. We want to levy a toll and pass it through Lloydminster but they have no authority to accept that. Can we get the authority to levy that toll?"

Mr. Medhurst answered this question "At the moment we are not able to give you a satisfactory answer. The whole question is being studied now to find out some way of compensation for the rurals."

Slides were shown by Mr. Fraser from the Chipman Chemical Company, illustrating different methods of spraying brush. Mr. Fraser talked for a few minutes about the different kinds of chemical and machines, stressing the fact that the brush should be sprayed before it is allowed to grow too high. He also urged that complete coverage was the most important factor in a successful spray job.

Mr. Darling, Minister of Telephones, was introduced and spoke of his disappointment at not being able to attend the meeting last year, and his pleasure at being able to be present this year. He said he believed the main cause of the problems that the telephone companies are having is the progress and change in conditions on the prairies today--the change in farm life, the advanced education, the moving of so many farm people to the city, the new modes of transportation. He felt that all these factors contributed to the many problems that are arising. Mr. Darling said that he had been exceedingly interested in the problems that had already been discussed and that he was anxious to hear about further problems that companies were having.

The resolution committee then read and moved the following resolutions:

1. Moved by Connaught, seconded by Fern Glen:

Whereas, the Department of Telephones has instructed their operator that when a call comes in asking for a number on a circuit and the circuit is in use by local subscribers they are not to ring in or ask for the line.

And, whereas, these instructions in many cases greatly reduce the value of the service as many local subscribers will hold their lines for an indefinite period for local conversations while subscribers are waiting for the use of the line on business. And further, the depart-

ment uses the right to ask for the line or ring in when the line is required for long distance calls. We wish to draw their attention to the fact that many local calls are just as important as long distance calls.

Therefore, be it resolved that, we strongly request the operators be instructed that when a subscriber places a call for a line and it is only being used by parties on the circuit they either request the use of the line or ring in the number wanted. Carried.

2. Moved by Connaught, seconded by Meota that:

The Department of Telephones correspond with the Noremac Rural Telephone Company re: charges that they (Noremac) consider excessive with regard to damage done to private citizens. Agreed.

3. Moved by Marshall, seconded by Briarlea:

That the R. T. Act be amended so that rural telephone companies can deposit Special Levy funds with a Credit Union. Carried.

4. Moved by Briarlea:

That rural telephone linemen be allowed to carry poles and equipment on truck with a farm truck lineman. Carried.

5. Moved by Edam, seconded by Fern Glen:

That the Telephone Directories be printed for distribution at an earlier date as new subscribers receive no directories until June or July. Supplementary lists of subscribers may be printed to cover late subscribers. TABLED.

6. Moved by Fern Glen, seconded by Rozilee:

Whereas, the rural telephone companies in the province of Saskatchewan are collecting long distance accounts without remuneration, and as this constitutes a greater portion of the work involved by secretary-treasurers;

Therefore, be it resolved that a commission of 10 percent be paid to all companies collecting Long Distance accounts or in lieu thereof to be allowed to deduct \$1 from switching fees of each subscriber. Carried.

7. Moved by Lawrie, seconded by Rozilee:

That the following resolution be taken up by every delegate with their respective companies to arrive at a conclusion to be presented at the meeting next year:

"... that there should be a super-annuation scheme with rural companies..."

The chairman declared time for nominations Mr. Darling acted as chairman for the election of the president.

Moved by Manitou Lake, and seconded by Young that Mr. Randall be re-elected as president. Carried. The acting chairman declared Mr. Randall re-elected.

In re-assuming the chair, Mr. Randall expressed his appreciation for the trust that the members had placed in him.

Moved by Nipawin, seconded by Briarlea, that Mr. Fritshaw be vice-president.

Moved that nominations cease. Mr. Fritshaw was declared re-elected.

Ten were nominated to the Board of Directors:

Mr. H. Youngwirth - - Prince Albert, Sask.
 Mr. M. Scramstad - - - - - Hendon, Sask.
 Mr. W. Streeton, sr., - - - Plunkett, Sask.
 Mr. R.J. Greaves - - - - Star City, Sask.
 Mr. J. Larson - - - - - Young, Sask.
 Mr. H.B. Polkinghorne - - Marsden, Sask.
 Mr. L. Flowers - - - - Punnichy, Sask.
 Mr. T. Packer - - - - - Eston, Sask.
 Mr. J. Fitzgerald - - - - Meota, Sask.
 Mr. G. Furneaux - - - - Nipawin, Sask.

Convention place for 1953: There was an invitation from Prince Albert. It was moved by Manitou Lake, and seconded by Hildrop, that the Prince Albert invitation be accepted. Carried.

Q:—Is there anything in the Telephone Act that would penalize the use of profane language over the phone?

A:—The company has the power to penalize anyone using profane language but it would be difficult to prove.

Mr. Medhurst: They can very definitely be penalized. When we receive a complaint we look into it and after it is proved and a second warning is not heeded, we discontinue service.

Q:—If the wires on the road are not high enough is there anything against a party tearing them down?

A:—When the municipal department raises your road, then your telephone should fall in line. You have to look after your part as well as the municipality.

Q:—(Marshall) Could you put up a bridge to carry it over the road? Can we do that?

A:—Yes, you can use a 2x4 or a 4x4.

Q:—Can the municipal secretary give permission to move a building on the highway.

A:—No.

Q:—What is the regulation over a municipal road for our wires? Is it 16½ feet?

A:—It used to be. It has been raised to 18 feet. It is the same height all over with the exception of the railroad. Over railways it is 25 feet.

There being no further business it was moved by Fern Glen and seconded by Prince Albert, that this meeting adjourn. Carried.

President

F. RANDALL,
Leacross, Sask.

Sec.-Treas.

J. M. STROEDER,
Pilger, Sask.